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## **Digital Orphanhood: A systematic review of the landscape of digital citizenship and civic outcomes in Latin America**

**Guillermo Zaracho-Mármol , Emilian González-Rubalcava , Andrés Sandoval-Hernández ,  
Eliana Osorio-Saez**

*University of Bath, UK*

### **Abstract**

The relationship between digital citizenship and civic outcomes remains understudied in the Latin American context. This gap is often attributed to the persistent digital divide across the region where essential digital literacy skills are unevenly developed. This systematic literature review examines the relationship between digital literacy skills and citizenship in Latin America and how it is related to civic outcomes. The study followed the PRISMA 2020 protocol for research methods, and databases such as Scopus, EBSCO, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, ERIC, SciELO, Redalyc, and Latindex were used to retrieve studies published between 2000 and 2025. This process led to the selection of 63 studies. After a thematic analysis, studies were organised into three themes according to their main analytical focus: the relationship between digital divide and literacy skills (theme 1); the relationship between literacy skills and digital citizenship (theme 2); and the relationship between digital citizenship and civic outcomes (theme 3). The results indicate that the digital divide remains a persistent issue directly affecting the development of digital literacy skills across the region. This situation became more evident after the COVID-19 pandemic. A lack of digital literacy skills consequently has a negative impact on digital citizenship and civic outcomes. The Latin American context faces a scenario of “digital orphanhood,” a condition in which individuals lack meaningful guidance from government, institutions and other agents for critical and purposeful digital inclusion and engagement. The findings suggest an urgent need for holistic and interdisciplinary action by governments, institutions, and other stakeholders to foster effective interventions across the region.

**Keywords:** Digital Education, Digital Citizenship, Civic Education, Digital Divide, Digital Skills, Digital Orphanhood